

## History 315: Defining and Defying Difference: Race, Ethnicity, and Empire

TTh 12:00 PM–1:20 PM, Vollum 116



Miss Ebony Miss Mahogany Miss Sateerwood Miss Allspice Miss Sarsalwood Miss Golden Apple Miss Jasmine Miss Pomegrarace Miss Lotus Miss Appleblonsom

“Ten Types, One People,” Jamaica, 1955

Conference Leader: Radhika Natarajan, [radhika.natarajan@reed.edu](mailto:radhika.natarajan@reed.edu), @RadhikaAN #Hist315  
Office Hours: Vollum 121, Monday & Wednesday, 3:00 PM – 4:00 PM and by appointment

From the origins of the British Empire in the sixteenth century, the encounter between Britons and colonial subjects demanded explanations of human difference. In this course, we will consider two categories of human difference—race and ethnicity. We will examine how these categories were shaped by political and economic circumstances, namely by their imperial formation.

The focus of this course will be on how categories of difference are formulated, sustained, and contested. We will read seven historical monographs to examine particular case studies. These case studies will include histories of plantation slavery in the Anglo-Caribbean, family relations under the East India Company, the formulation of English identity in relation to their encounters with post-emancipation Afro-Caribbeans, the co-constitution of English and Bengali identity, the new system of caste that emerged under the colonial state, English families in India, and the racial politics of citizenship in post-war Britain. Throughout we will pay attention to the geographies of racial formation, the ways that identity was constructed in local, national,

and imperial registers. We will also attend to the role gender and family relations played in the construction of racial and ethnic identity. More than histories of particular racialized groups, we will examine the way the boundaries of race and ethnicity are constantly shifting.

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

- demonstrate knowledge of the rise and fall of the British empire;
- analyze race and ethnicity as historical formations, with attention to the shifting nature of racial identification, the role of the state in cultivating categories of difference, and the ability of people to engage with and challenge dominant modes of racialization;
- consider the differentials of power in the ability to shape categories of difference;
- evaluate the imperial, national, and local registers of categories of difference;
- assess historical arguments with attention to evidence, historiography, and significance.

### The Honor Principle and Classroom Conduct

At Reed, the honor principle governs the conduct of our community. Honor is not narrowly or negatively defined, but guides how we treat each other with fairness, respect, and dignity. These ideals must be expressed not simply in attitude, but in action.

Community demands participation, and to participate, you must show up. If you have a reasonable excuse for missing class—religious holidays, illness, or family emergency—it is your responsibility to let me know ahead of time. Unexcused absences will negatively affect your grade, and more than one unexcused absence could lead to failing the course.

A successful conference depends upon prepared and active participants. For discussions, give the conference your undivided attention by turning off your cell phone. Food is prohibited in the classroom, unless you share with everyone. Bring the assigned readings, as well as a means of taking notes. Consider how you can foster thoughtful dialogue. When you speak, support your claims with examples from the texts. Attentive listening is as important as speaking to facilitating conference discussion. Dismissive or hostile comments will not be tolerated.

The honor principle not only applies to our discussions in class, but also to your written work. Your work must be your own. It is your responsibility (with the help of others) to learn the standards of proper citation and attribution. In this course, we will use the Chicago Manual of Style's Notes and Bibliography system.

### Accommodation

If you require accommodation to complete course work due to a disability, please see me as soon as possible to discuss your DSS-specified accommodations. If you have not yet met Disability Support Services to prepare a plan, we can also discuss this process in office hours.

### Communication

In addition to treating each other honorably in conference, I encourage you to help and support each other outside of the classroom. When I am in my office, my door is open, and you are welcome to come in. I also have confirmed office hours during which we can talk about the

readings, your papers, how conference is going, etc. If you cannot make it to my office hours, please send me an email proposing a few possible times to meet (Monday–Friday, 9 AM–5 PM). Email should only be used to inform me of an absence or to schedule a meeting outside of office hours. For everything else, let us talk in person.

### Student-Consultant Program

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This semester, I am participating in the Center for Teaching and Learning’s Student-Consultant program. Hannah Graunke will attend our class and provide feedback on ways I can better structure the course, facilitate classroom discussion, and support student research and writing. We invite you to join our dialogue about creating the best conditions for learning. In addition to in-person conversations, you are welcome to contact Hannah via email: [hagraunke@reed.edu](mailto:hagraunke@reed.edu).

### Assignments

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Along with classroom participation, your work will be evaluated in the following ways:

Map Quiz:	September 15. Simple quiz about the places we will discuss in the course.
Book Review:	October 13 (or earlier). 800-word review of Bush, Ghosh, Hall or Sinha.
Historical Analysis:	November 29 (or earlier). 2000-word essay on a contemporary topic whose roots are in the history we study.
Final Paper:	10-page research paper on a topic of your choice.
	November 3                      Topic Approval
	November 15                    Prospectus
	Nov. 29–Dec. 6                In Class Presentation
	December 12                    Final Draft

### Required Texts

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- Barbara Bush, *Slave Women in Caribbean Society, 1650–1832*, Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1990.
- Durba Ghosh, *Sex and the Family in Colonial India: The Making of Empire*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2008.
- Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination, 1830–1867*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002.
- Mrinalini Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity: the 'Manly Englishman' and the 'Effeminate Bengali' in the Late Nineteenth Century*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995.
- Nicholas Dirks, *Castes of Mind: Colonialism and the Making of Modern India*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001.
- Elizabeth Buettner, *Imperial Families: Britons and Late Imperial India*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.
- Kennetta Hammond Perry, *London is the Place for Me: Black Britons, Citizenship, and the Politics of Race*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.

Readings available via Moodle are marked by a +.

Week 1	Thinking Historically about Human Difference
August 30	Introduction: Race, Ethnicity, Empire
September 1	+ John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith, "Introduction"  + Michael Desmond & Mustafa Emirbayer, "What is Racial Domination?"  + Barbara Fields, "Of Rogues and Geldings"
Week 2	What do we talk about when we talk about race? / What is empire?
September 6	+ Michael Omi and Howard Winant, "Racial Formation in the United States"  + Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper, "Beyond 'Identity' "
September 8	+ Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper, "Imperial Trajectories"  + John Darwin, <i>Unfinished Empire</i> , xi–32
Week 3	The Caribbean
September 13	+ Philippa Levine, <i>The British Empire</i> , 13–30  Barbara Bush, <i>Slave Women in Caribbean Society, 1650–1832</i> , 1–82
September 15	Barbara Bush, <i>Slave Women in Caribbean Society, 1650–1832</i> , 83–167 *** Map Quiz ***
Week 4	The East India Company
September 20	+ Philippa Levine, <i>The British Empire</i> , 61–81  Durba Ghosh, <i>Sex and the Family in Colonial India</i> , 1–132
September 22	Durba Ghosh, <i>Sex and the Family in Colonial India</i> , 133–256
Week 5	The English and their Others, 1
September 27	+ Cooper and Burbank, "Myths of Modern Colonialism"  Catherine Hall, <i>Civilising Subjects</i> , 1–65
September 29	Catherine Hall, <i>Civilising Subjects</i> , 69–208

Week 6	The English and their Others, 2
October 4	Catherine Hall, <i>Civilising Subjects</i> , 209–337
October 6	Catherine Hall, <i>Civilising Subjects</i> , 338–441
Week 7	Masculinity and Racialization
October 11	Mrinalini Sinha, <i>Colonial Masculinities</i> , 1–99
October 13	Mrinalini Sinha, <i>Colonial Masculinities</i> , 100–185 *** Book Review Due ***
----- Fall Break -----	
Week 8	The Imperial Order of Things
October 25	+ Peter Hoffenberg, “Imperial and National Taxonomies”  + Kylie Message and Ewan Johnston, “The World Within the City: The Great Exhibition, Race, Class, and Social Reform”  + Sadiyah Qureshi, “Transforming ‘Unfruitful Wonder’ ”
October 27	+ Metcalf and Metcalf, <i>A Concise History of India</i> , 91–122 Nicholas Dirks, <i>Castes of Mind</i> , 1–80
Week 9	The State and Ethnic Identity
November 1	+ Bernard Cohn, “The Census, Social Structure, and Objectification in South Asia”  Nicholas Dirks, <i>Castes of Mind</i> , 81–227
November 3	Nicholas Dirks, <i>Castes of Mind</i> , 231–315 *** Topic for Final Paper Due ***
Week 10	The Family
November 8	Elizabeth Buettner, <i>Imperial Families</i> , 1–145
November 10	Elizabeth Buettner, <i>Imperial Families</i> , 146–270

Week 11	Decolonization
November 15	Kennetta Hammond Perry, <i>London is the Place for Me</i> , 1–125 *** Prospectus for Final Paper Due ***
November 17	Kennetta Hammond Perry, <i>London is the Place for Me</i> , 126–247
Week 12	Legacies of Imperial Racial Formation
November 22	+ Douglas M. Haynes, “The Whiteness of <i>Civilization</i> : The Transatlantic Crisis of White Supremacy and British Television Programming in the United States in the 1970s”  + Antoinette Burton, “When Was Britain? Nostalgia for the Nation at the End of the ‘American Century’ ”
November 24	Thanksgiving
Week 13	
November 29	Student Presentations *** Historical Analysis Paper Due ***
December 1	Student Presentations
Week 14	
December 6	Student Presentations
December 12	*** Final Paper Due ***